

TRANS-MISSISSIPPI CONGRESS.

STATEHOOD

FOR

NEW MEXICO.

SPEECH OF

HON. L^y BRADFORD PRINCE,

OF NEW MEXICO.

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RESOLUTION.

WHEREAS, The principle of self-government is the fundamental idea of American institution, and no body of American citizens should be deprived of it except under temporary circumstances which render its exercise impossible;

Resolved, That a compliance with this great principle, as well as every consideration of justice and equity, requires the immediate admission to the Union of New Mexico, which fully possesses the population, character, resources and financial ability necessary to qualify it for statehood.

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT: I have the less hesitation in urging this subject on your attention at this time, because this Congress has so emphatically placed itself on record as to New Mexican statehood in the past.

At eight successive sessions of the Congress, beginning at New Orleans in 1892, and including the congresses which followed at Ogden, San Francisco, St. Louis, Omaha, Salt Lake, Wichita and Houston, I have had the honor to introduce a resolution, similar in its purport to that now under consideration, and in every instance the Congress has signified its approval by a unanimous vote: so that the people of the great Trans-Mississippi country have expressed their opinion with no uncertain sound.

In asking you to reaffirm that expression today, I will not repeat all of the arguments which I have used on previous occasions, but wish to emphasize the point that among American citizens the right of self-government should not have to be begged for as a privilege, but should be conceded as a right. In a case like that of New Mexico, a longer continuance of territorial government is not only improper and injurious but is unrepugnant and in violation of the dearest rights of our people as citizens of the Great Republic.

The considerations and statistics to which I will ask your attention are substantially the same as those presented by me to the U. S. Senate committee as long ago as June 25, 1892, and though thus before the people for over nine years have never yet been satisfactorily controverted or impeached.

RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Self-government is an inherent right of American citizenship; in fact it is inseparable from the fundamental principles of republican institutions. The right to a representative voice in the legislative body which enacts the laws which he is to obey and impose the taxes which he is obliged to pay, is one dear to every American, and the right to take part in the selection of the national chief magistrate and of the local governor and similar officials is likewise one of which he will not willingly be deprived.

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These principles of self-government are so fundamental in our institutions that no citizen should be deprived of the right except under such peculiar circumstances as render its exercise impossible or dangerous. When a population is so sparse that it is not able to support a local government or that elections are impracticable, one of these exceptional cases occurs, and such a population has to be ruled in some other way and is deprived temporarily of its right to self-government; but the moment the peculiar conditions are removed the disability should vanish with them and the citizen should regain his inherent right.

To apply this practically, while in a section of country the people are so few or so poor as to make self-government impossible, they can be temporarily organized under a territorial government, in order to protect life and property, but the moment they are able to become self-governing they are entitled to that right. A territorial condition is an exceptional one, only intended as a temporary expedient, and is in derogation of the civil rights of all the citizens affected thereby; and, as the normal condition of an American citizen is one of self-government, the burden of proof is upon those who desire to continue the abnormal form, and not upon those who insist on the organization of a state.

We submit that no circumstance now exists, in relation to the people of New Mexico which justifies their being longer deprived of their full rights under a state government. If one of them moves into Colorado or into Texas, he is immediately invested with the full rights of American citizenship; if he moves back, he loses them. This is improper and absurd. He is no more intelligent or honest or patriotic because he has crossed an imaginary line, nor does he lose any good qualities when he recrosses it.

Lack of sufficient population or property, or intelligence, might cause from necessity a temporary suspension of full civil rights to the inhabitants of a district of country, but I will endeavor to show, briefly but plainly, that neither of such conditions exists in New Mexico at present.

SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS.

Apart from the obligation which the nation owes to each of its citizens to secure to him the right of self-government, except where special exigencies prevent, specific promises were made to the people of New Mexico at the time of its acquisition, which have hitherto been disregarded. When General Kearny made his peaceful entry into Santa Fe, he issued a formal proclamation on August 22, 1846, assuming the government of the entire territory, and containing this statement: "It is the wish and intention of the United States to provide for New Mexico a free government, with the least possible delay, similar to those in the United States." The people were satisfied with the pacific sentiment of the American commander, relied on the promises of the proclamation, and offered no opposition to the occupation of the whole area of New Mexico. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, executed February 21, 1848, confirmed this promise.

ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN STATEHOOD.

Relying on these pledges and anxious to possess all the rights of American citizenship, the people, early in 1850, held a convention, adopted a constitution, elected state officers, a legislature, and William S. Messervy as member of Congress. In July the legislature elected R. H. Weightman and F. C. Cunningham as senators, and they, with the member of Congress, proceeded to Washington. While on the journey they were met by the intelligence of the passage, on September 9, of the famous "compromise measure," which admitted California as a state and relegated New Mexico to the condition of a territory.

From that time to the present, attempts to secure admission have constantly been made. The territorial legislature has repeatedly memorialized Congress on the subject, the delegates have introduced

enabling acts, and the people have never rested contentedly under their deprivation of the rights of citizenship. Congress has not entirely failed to respond to these appeals. Both houses of the forty-third Congress passed an enabling act, the house by a vote of 160 to 54 and the senate by 32 to 11. The bill was slightly amended in the senate and failed because it was impossible at the end of the session (it passed the senate February 24) to bring it up for concurrence in the house. In the succeeding Congress a similar bill passed the senate by a vote of 35 to 15, was reported favorably in the house, but failed to be reached. For about twenty years scarcely a Congress has passed in which an enabling act has not been passed in one house or the other, but by some accident or obstacle concurrent action has failed. If it was proper to admit New Mexico in 1874 or 1876, before it possessed a mile of railroad, a single public building, a developed mine, a matured orchard, or an alfalfa field, what reason can now be given for delay, when its population has greatly increased, its condition vastly improved, and its resources of all kinds are being developed into sources of wealth?

POPULATION.

In this respect the claim to statehood is indisputable. No territory at the time of its admission, with the exception of Dakota and Utah, has contained the population now in New Mexico. By the census of 1900 it had 195,310 inhabitants, without counting the Indians on the reservations. The real population, as has been conclusively shown in public documents and is practically unquestioned, was between 225,000 and 235,000, the difficulty of full enumeration where the area is so vast and the population so scattered accounting for the difference. But, taking the census figures, the above statement as to other territories is correct. The following table shows the date of the admission of each territory, with its population according to the next preceding census. Of course, in some cases, there had been considerable growth between the census and the date of admission, but there is likewise an increase in New Mexico since 1900.

State.	Date of admission.	Population.	State.	Date of admission.	Population.
Tennessee.....	1796	35,691	Minnesota.....	1858	6,077
Ohio.....	1802	43,365	Oregon.....	1859	13,294
Louisiana.....	1812	76,556	Kansas.....	1861	107,206
Indiana.....	1816	24,530	Nevada.....	1864	6,857
Mississippi.....	1817	*40,353	Nebraska.....	1867	28,841
Illinois.....	1818	12,282	Colorado.....	1876	39,864
Alabama.....	1819	(+)	North Dakota.....	1889	135,177
Missouri.....	1821	66,557	South Dakota.....	1889	75,116
Arkansas.....	1836	30,388	Washington.....	1889	30,159
Michigan.....	1837	31,639	Montana.....	1890	84,385
Florida.....	1845	54,477	Idaho.....	1890	60,705
Iowa.....	1846	43,112	Wyoming.....	1890	207,905
Wisconsin.....	1848	30,945	Utah.....	1896	
California.....	1850	92,597			

* Including Alabama.

+ Included with Mississippi.

The lesson drawn from this table becomes more marked when we remember that in many of the territories mentioned a large fraction of the population was made up of slaves who were not citizens and had no vote, and further that in nearly all of them the proportion of aliens was far greater than in New Mexico. Thus, in Missouri there were over 10,000 slaves, in Florida, over 25,000, and in Louisiana over 34,000. When these numbers are deducted, it reduces the self-governing population quite materially.

So it is evident that there is now no reason, on the score of lack of

sufficient population, for depriving the people of New Mexico of the ordinary rights of citizens. On the contrary it has more population than the old state of Delaware, 50,000 more than Idaho, more than double the population of Wyoming and five times that of Nevada.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH.

The next question is whether the value of taxable property is sufficient to support a state government. If not, that might be a valid reason for longer delay. But we find that the average assessed valuation of property for the last ten years is over \$40,000,000. This is much larger than that of many other territories at the time of their admission. For instance the valuation of Wyoming was \$31,000,000, and of Idaho only \$28,000,000. The credit of New Mexico is excellent, notwithstanding the prejudice against territorial securities in the financial centers.

Beginning in July, 1889, it has been gradually paying off its bonded debt, having in 1891 to pay as high as 117 for bonds it desired to redeem, and within the last few years the interest on much of its indebtedness has been reduced to five and even to four per cent.

RESOURCES.

The resources of the territory, as the foundation of its ability to sustain its own government permanently, are properly a matter for inquiry. And on this subject we may make the broad assertion that New Mexico is endowed with greater natural resources, and in greater variety than any other state or territory of the union. This probably sounds extravagant, and may be considered as a specimen of western hyperbole, but while it is a bold statement, it is made with an entire appreciation of its full significance, and is well considered and deliberate. Let me repeat it. No single state or territory embraces within its borders the variety and extent of natural resources which exist in New Mexico. Only one approaches it, and that is California; and the possession of almost limitless beds of coal, both bituminous and anthracite, give New Mexico a superiority even over that favored state. If time permitted it would be easy to show the truth of this general statement. As it is, I must refer to more extended documents, which will be supplied with pleasure, for the particulars.

PUBLIC PROPERTY.

No territory has ever erected so many public buildings, or possessed so much public property as New Mexico. Without the slightest aid from the national government, it built a most beautiful capitol, a substantial penitentiary, and in 1889 and 1890 an insane asylum, university, agricultural college and school of mines. More recently it has added to the list the normal university at Las Vegas, normal school at Silver City, military institute at Roswell and blind asylum at Santa Fe; and when the capitol was destroyed by fire it erected another which is the object of general admiration. All these structures are more than creditable, they are sources of pride and gratification, and with slight exception they have been paid for from taxation without the incurring of any indebtedness whatever. In nearly every western state the institutions of a similar character have been erected wholly or in part by grants of land made at the time of their admission, but New Mexico has not waited for such assistance. In addition to the above, more than half of our counties have erected commodious and elegant court houses of stone or brick within the past few years.

It seems strange that with all these facts in her favor, New Mexico should have been so long deprived of statehood. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that there has existed in the eastern mind a prejudice against her on account of the supposed

CHARACTER OF THE POPULATION.

By many, the people are looked upon as foreign and not in harmony with American institutions. It is strange that this objection should arise in a land which absorbs half a million of foreigners every year, and which manages to assimilate the very worst elements of continental Europe. It should be remembered that New Mexico was acquired in 1846, that all of its inhabitants except the oldest were born on American soil, and that its people belonged to a sister republic with institutions similar to ours, and so needed no new education in free government. For almost half a century they have been electing their legislatures, making their laws, and carrying on their local government under the American system.

The people have shown themselves as loyal as any in the nation. During the rebellion, out of her total population of 93,567, she sent 6,561 into the army. Her volunteers fought at Valverde, Peralta and on other fields; and at Glorieta, together with their comrades of Colorado, defeated the enemy and turned back the column which was advancing northerly from Texas with the intention of cutting off the Pacific slope from the remainder of the country. The value of that service to the Union cause can scarcely be overestimated. The total number of volunteers from the territories now composing the six new states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming was 1,170. Colorado sent but 4,903, and Nebraska, Oregon and Nevada, taken together, did not contribute but 6,047, being 500 less than New Mexico alone.

In the recent war with Spain, the people showed equal patriotism, no less than 1,089 volunteers enlisting, including about 500 "Rough Riders," who gained a high reputation at Las Guasimas and on San Juan Hill.

If we look at the foreign element in the population we will find it smaller in New Mexico than anywhere in the country, except in certain southern states. A comparison with territories recently admitted is instructive in this regard. The figures are those of the census of 1890, which are the latest available on this point.

New Mexico contained 11,259 foreign inhabitants out of a total of 153,593, at 7½ per cent.

Idaho had 21 per cent.; Wyoming, 24; Washington, 25; Montana, 43, and North Dakota 45.

Even in the older states, New York and Michigan had 26 per cent.; Massachusetts, 29; Rhode Island, Wisconsin and California, 30; and Minnesota 36.

So that New Mexico looms up as a specially native American community.

But to the uninformed the large number of voters of Spanish descent is looked upon as a grave misfortune. There could not be a greater mistake. It is the possession of that conservative element in connection with the energetic and enterprising American from the east which gives New Mexico her special advantages as a self-governing community over most other territories. Every one familiar with the far west knows that the principal danger in new communities arises from the unsettled and irresponsible character of much of the population.

They have energy, general intelligence, vigor and enterprise, and we recognize them in those respects as good state builders; but at the same time they have some characteristics not so desirable. One is that they are continually "on the move." The number of men through all that region with whom two years is a long residence in any one place is astonishing. The habit of moving is upon them, and they are always looking for some new place to which to migrate. Of course there are many solid, substantial citizens; but this restless, nomadic population constitutes an element that is always active, aggressive and noisy.



They are eager for office, ready to vote for any amount of taxation, and to their irresponsible action is principally due the heavy indebtedness and not infrequent bankruptcy of so many western cities and counties. They do the mischief and are gone before its effects are felt. The chief danger in many a new community comes from this class of men and from the over enthusiasm of others who think that life in the west is a continual boom, and many a state and territory has suffered from it. But New Mexico runs no such risk. She has a solid, stable, responsible and conservative element in her native population, which counteracts the danger. They are attached to the soil and have no thought of leaving. They are identified with the country, and naturally opposed to rash schemes which involve extravagant expense and debt. Mixed with the over zealous American, they form an admirable combination. Another objection which has been urged against us is that of

ILLITERACY.

Some years ago there may have been some force in this argument, but it is fast disappearing. In no respect has New Mexico been making such rapid progress as in public education. Even under the crude system which existed before the public school law of 1891, the number of children under instruction had increased in a ratio far in advance of the population. The census developed the fact that while the population of the territory increased 28 per cent. during the decade from 1880 to 1890, the number of children enrolled in the schools increased 283 per cent., or ten times as rapidly. During the last decade the gain has been equally gratifying. The school law of 1891 gave a great impetus to public instruction. Under its beneficent provisions the educational system is improving with great rapidity.

It should be remembered that all this has to be done by direct taxation, as we have had no school fund whatever. Should you deprive all of the states of their school funds a lamentable condition of affairs would result in many of them. If the educational matter is to be considered it should be weighed in the direction of giving us statehood, which will increase our means for public education rather than in depriving us of it.

CONCLUSION.

In every respect in which she can control her own destiny, New Mexico is improving and advancing. Her population and wealth are increasing. Railroads are reaching every section. The products of agriculture and horticulture, of the sheep range and the mines, are all enlarged. Great systems of modern irrigation are multiplying her fruitful acreage. The incubus of the past, the uncertainty of land titles, is being removed by the Land Court.

Thus in every way the tendency is upward and onward. The great obstacle to rapid advancement is the continued territorial condition. It is impossible to obtain money for needed development in a territory. Eastern capitalists will not loan or invest, as they have an idea that there is no stability of government or security for property without statehood. To a certain extent immigration is also retarded. It is apt to be thought that a territory is backward and unprogressive. The admission of New Mexico into the Union will give a great impetus to its prosperity. Population will flow in with rapidity. The capital needed for the development of our resources will be easily obtained. Rates of interest will be lowered. We will be relieved from certain Congressional statutes which now impede our progress. The people will feel that they are really American citizens, and not aliens or servants. All this will enkindle ambition, invigorate our energies, stimulate enterprise, and lead us on to a glorious future.



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